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James O'Byrne.

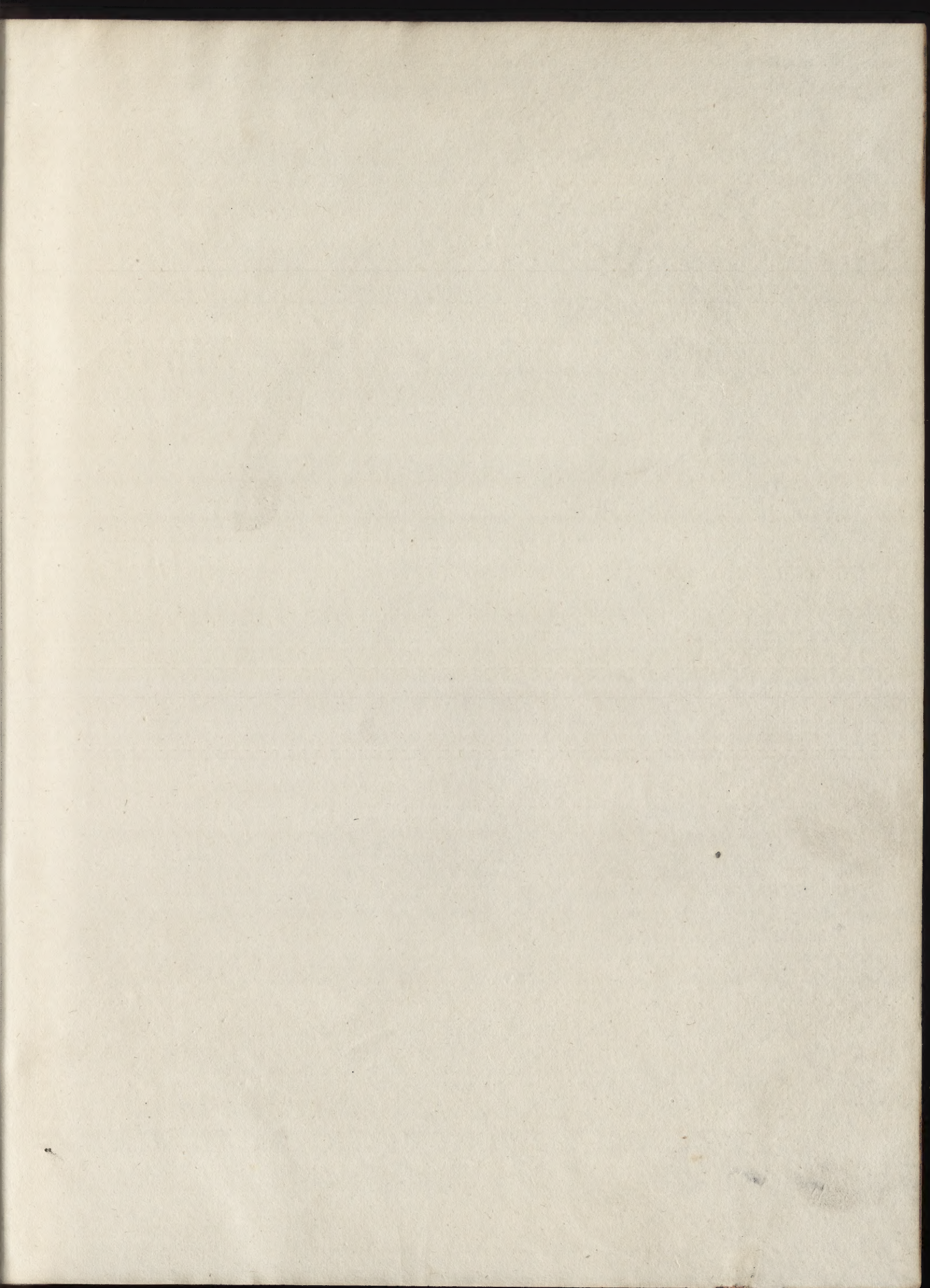


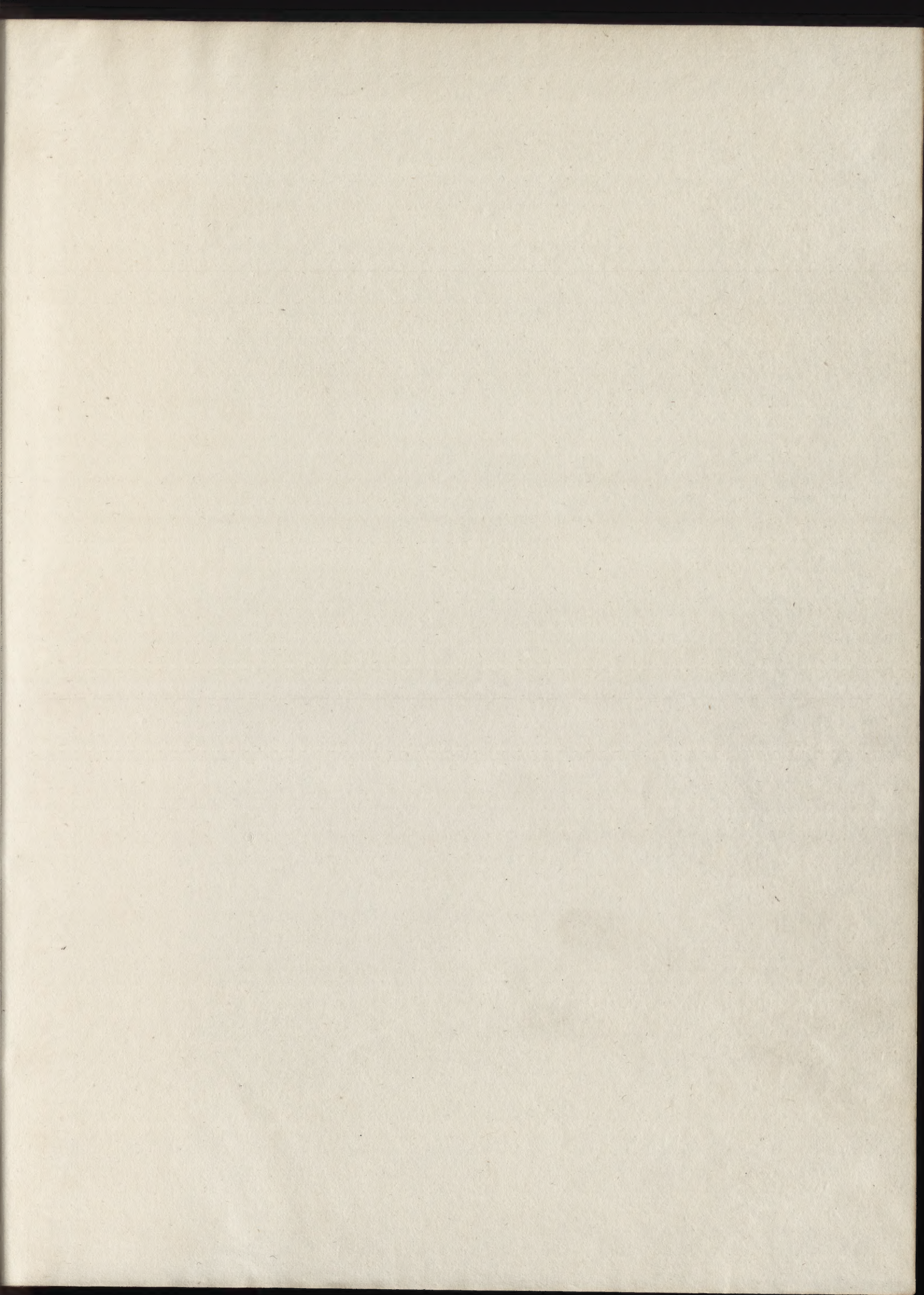
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*Presented by the Trustees of the
British Museum 1811*

STUDIES AND DESIGNS,

BY

RICHARD WILSON,

DONE

At Rome,

IN

THE YEAR 1752.

OXFORD:

PUBLISHED BY R. ARCHER, HIGH STREET;

AND SOLD BY MRS. RYLAND, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON.

1811.

STUDIES AND DISCUSSIONS

CHARLES L. BOWLES

MONOGRAPH

ST. JOHN

ST. JOHN

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ST. JOHN

Printed by J. Bartlett, Oxford.

TO
CHARLES OLDFIELD BOWLES, Esq.
OF NORTH ASTON,
IN
THE COUNTY OF OXFORD.

SIR,

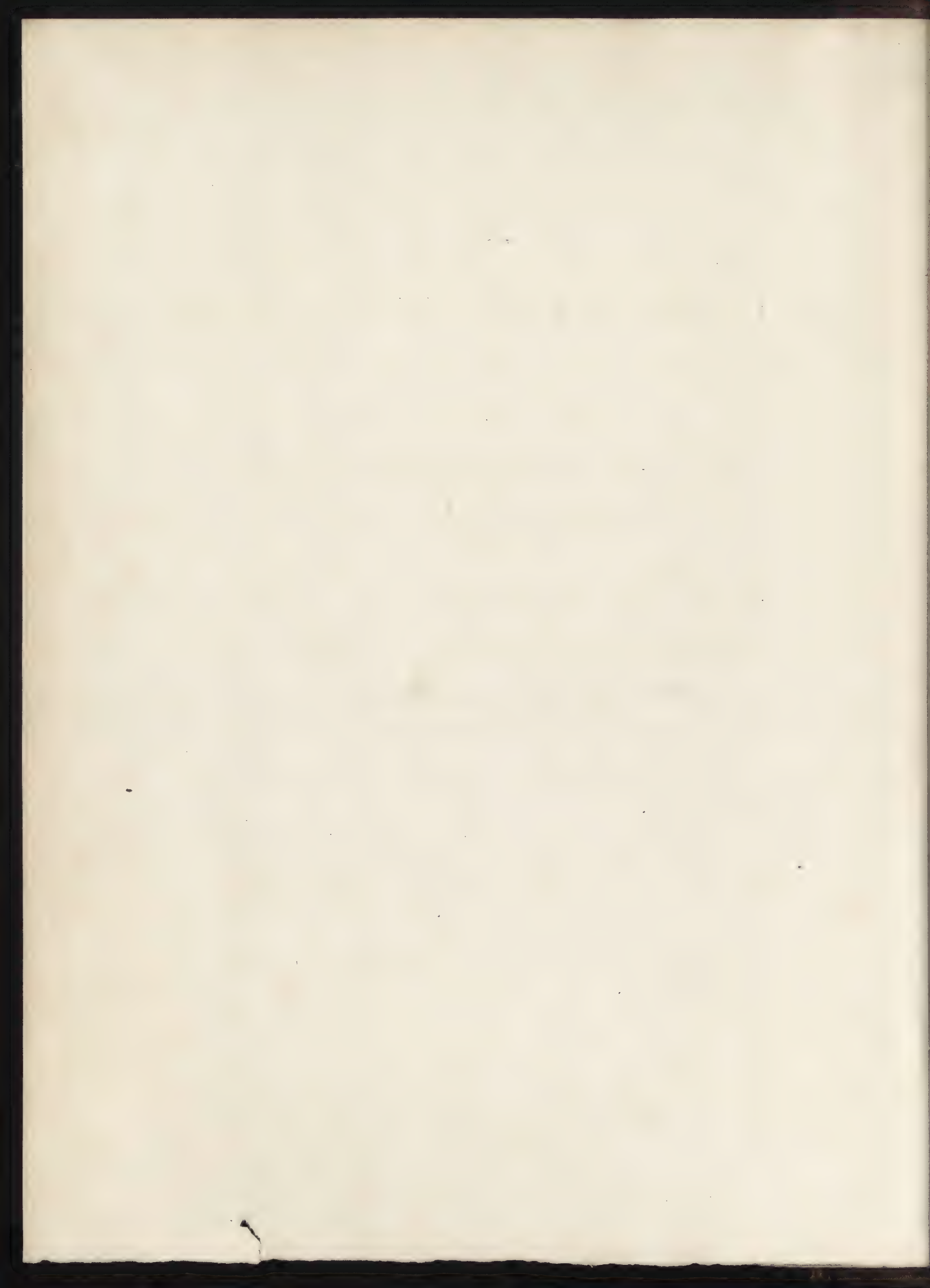
THE many marks of kindness I have received from your family, and in particular from your much respected Father, the late OLDFIELD BOWLES, Esq. to whose liberality the present work owes its existence, have encouraged me to take the liberty of inscribing it to You, as a small token of the respect and gratitude with which I shall ever remain,

Sir,

Your much obliged

and obedient Servant,

ROBERT ARCHER.



THE Etchings now presented to the Public, are fac-similes of Sketches in the possession of the late OLDFIELD BOWLES, Esq. of North Aston, in the County of OXFORD; who, with the liberality which uniformly marked his character, was desirous of opening to all the sources of instruction and amusement he enjoyed himself. A Connoisseur and Proficient in the art, he could appreciate the pleasure and advantage to be derived from the study of the slightest drawings, made, however hastily, by so great a Master as WILSON; in which, perhaps, the genius and mind of the Artist, and the rudiments of his style and manner of composition, are more easily traced than they can be in his finished pictures.

WILSON may be considered as the founder of an English School of landscape painting. His works have, since his death, been purchased with avidity, and are daily rising in estimation. It is therefore conceived, that even the slightest and least finished

of his sketches, if faithfully represented in the etching, will be interesting.

Of his Life, devoted to the study of his profession, and passed chiefly in retirement, not many anecdotes have been recorded ; but from those which have been published, the following short account has been collected.

RICHARD WILSON, the son of the Rev. JOHN WILSON, * Rector of Pineges in Montgomeryshire, and afterwards of Mould in Flintshire, was born August the first, 1714. The connections of his father were respectable. He was maternally related to the Lord Chancellor Camden ; he gave his son a good classical education, and discovering in him many early symptoms of taste and future excellence, under the patronage of SIR GEORGE WYNNE, Bart. he sent him to London, and placed him with Mr. T. WRIGHT, a portrait-painter of no very prominent abilities. Here, however, he attained to some proficiency in portrait-painting, † as appears from his having been employed to paint a large picture of His present Majesty, then Prince of

* European Magazine for June, 1790.

† Edwards's Anecdotes of Painters.

Wales, and his brother, the Duke of York, for Dr. HAYTER, Bishop of Norwich, at that time Preceptor to the Princes.

But WILSON's desire of improvement in the general principles of his art, was not to be confined within the verge of those opportunities, which his own country afforded. He determined to ground his knowledge, and form his taste, on the best models which Europe contained. For this purpose he visited Italy, and arrived at Venice some time in the *year 1749; where a conversation with Zuccarelli, aiding the attraction of his own genius and inclination, determined him to devote his talents to Landscape painting †. In this fascinating art he made rapid progress, and soon after presented MENGs with a landscape, in return for his portrait: this portrait of WILSON is one of the best MENGs ever painted, and is at present in the collection of SIR WATKYN WILLIAMS WYNNE ‡. From Venice he went to Rome with WILLIAM LOCK, Esq. for whom he painted some pictures, and made many sketches of the interesting country through which they passed.

* European Magazine.

† Edwards's Anecdotes of Painters.

‡ Ibid.

During his residence at Rome, he gained the friendship of VERNET, then in the zenith of his reputation ; who, delighted with WILSON's landscapes, desired to have one of them in exchange for one painted by himself. WILSON readily agreed to so flattering a proposal, and delivered his performance ; which the French artist generously exhibited to his visitors, and, to his immortal honour, recommended a rival to their favour*.

The Earl of Dartmouth was at that time at Rome, and invited WILSON to accompany him to Naples. For this excellent critic WILSON made several studies, and painted two capital pictures. About this time, in the year 1752, the Sketches now offered to the public were made ; and though extremely slight, and probably only memoranda of the places through which he passed, they are interesting from having been taken at that period of his life, in which he seems to have formed his grand ideas of composition, and his masterly style of expression. He has sometimes been considered as an imitator of CLAUDE ; but neither his composition nor expression justify that notion : his style is truly his own, formed on an accurate observation of Nature, and a study of the best models of his art, the pictures of those

* Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters.

artists, who most accurately represent the grandeur and sublimity of Nature, not those of CLAUDE alone, but those of SALVATOR ROSA, and more especially of GASPAR POUSSIN.

But to his own observation of Nature he was most indebted. With the country round Subbiaco, a city on the banks of the Turrone, about forty miles from Rome, he was particularly delighted; as he was also with the grand and sublime scenery of Monte San Trinita, about eight miles to the east of Subbiaco: there his excursions were pursued with enthusiasm, and the wild beauties of Nature made a deep impression on his susceptible mind.

In the year * 1755, WILSON returned to England, where his classical pictures soon gained the admiration of connoisseurs and men of real taste. To the first exhibition in † 1760, he sent his picture of a Storm, with the story of Niobe introduced in the foreground, which confirmed his reputation. In 1765, he exhibited, with other pictures, a view of Rome from the Villa Madama, which was purchased by the late Marquis of Tavistock

* European Magazine.

† Edwards's Anecdotes of Painters.

That line of his profession, however, to which WILSON's genius had led him, was rewarded with fame rather than opulence; and toward the close of his life, he accepted, on the death of Mr. HAYMAN, the situation of Librarian to the Royal Academy, of which he was himself one of the Founders. He retained this situation, till the decline of his health compelled him to retire to his Brother's house in Wales, where he died in May 1782.

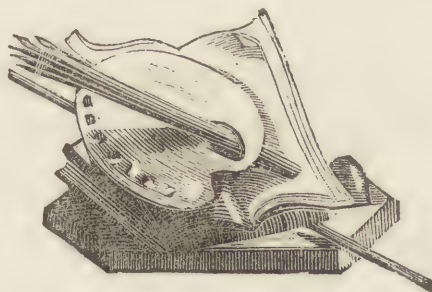
WILSON, in his youth, is said to have been handsome, but he afterwards grew corpulent. His countenance was an index of his character, and bespoke openness and honesty. He had a high spirit of independence, and did not choose to solicit patronage, or even to cultivate with assiduity connections which might have raised him in his profession. His greatest happiness consisted in the conversation of a few select friends. His naturally strong sense was improved by habitual observation; and if his temper was hasty, his heart was warm, sincere, and friendly. As a painter of landscape, he has not been excelled by any of his countrymen. The choice of grand and sublime subjects, the happy distribution of his lights and shadows, their breadth and effect, and the freshness and harmony of his tints, were among the chief characteristics of his pictures. Of the originality of his

style we cannot but be convinced; it is founded, as has been already observed, not so much on the study of pictures, as of Nature itself. He has represented the general character of Italy, its dreary and inhospitable plains, rendered solemnly interesting by the mouldering fragments of Temples, Tombs, and Aqueducts, with peculiar effect. He has represented also, with equal truth, its rugged and romantic scenery, and convinced us, that he observed Nature under all her appearances, and had a characteristic touch for all her forms; it has, however, been remarked by * Mr. FUSELI, that "though in effects of dewy freshness, and silent evening lights, few equalled and fewer excelled him, his grandeur is oftener allied to horror, bustle, and convulsion, than to calmness and tranquillity." His historical figures, indeed, have sometimes been censured, and his introduction of ideal beings and heathen divinities into some of his pictures, has not escaped the severe criticism of SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: yet it should be observed, that he was treading on classical ground; that he was representing scenery, which to an imagination like his suggested its congenial fables, consecrated by the Poets of antiquity; and moreover, that, if example could afford justifica-

* Vid. Fuseli's Edition of Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters.

tion, he might shelter himself in this respect under the high authority of **POUSSIN**.

Some of the finest specimens of **WILSON**'s genius are now in the possession of his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, The Earl of Dartmouth, Sir Watkyn Williams Wynne, Bart. Sir George Beaumont, Bart. Colonel Vaughan, Samuel Rogers, Esq. Lady Ford, and Mrs. Brooke.



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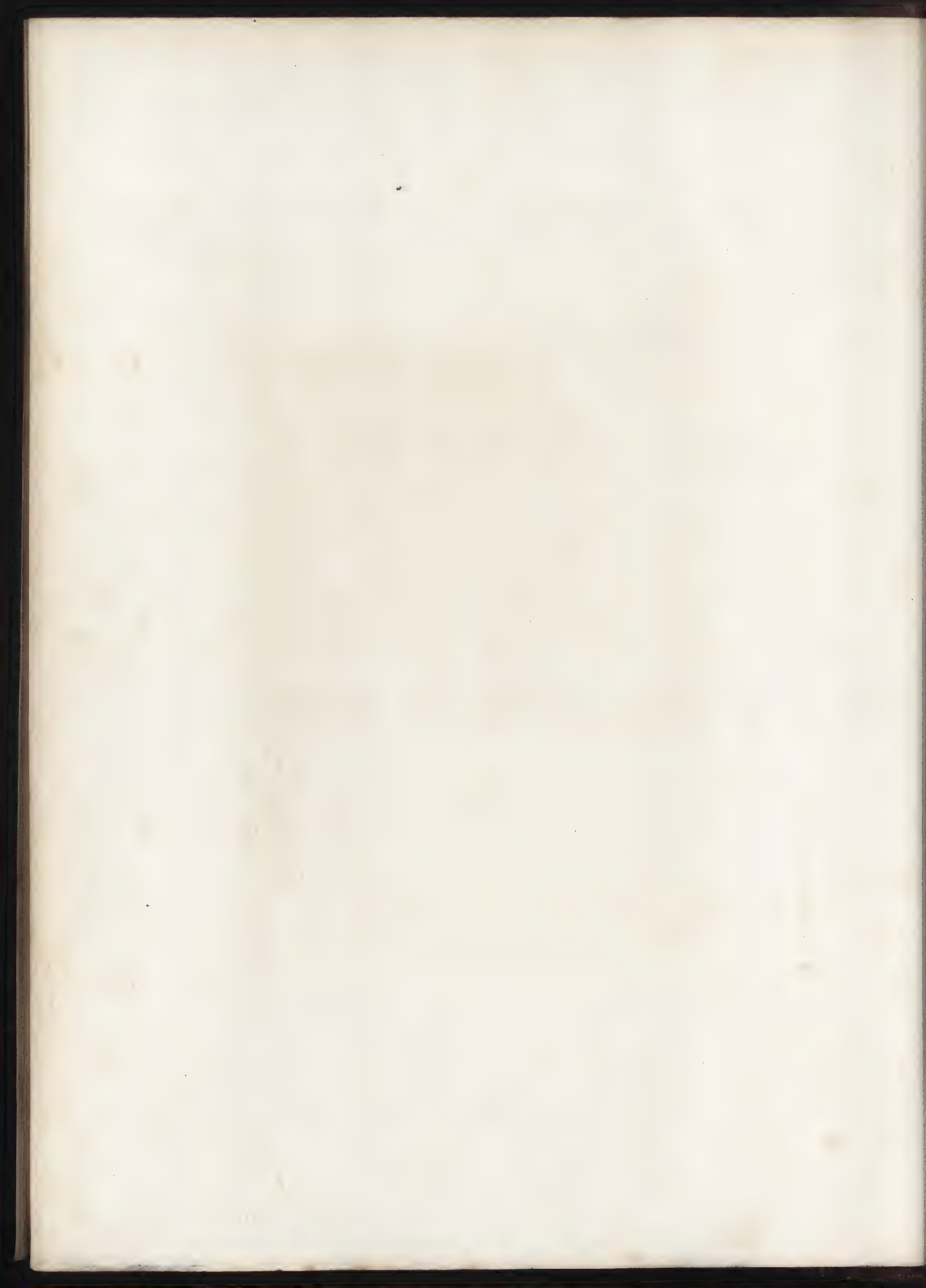
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Studies & Designs
by

R. Wilson, -

done at Rome in year
1752.

Caffe' dell' Inglese.







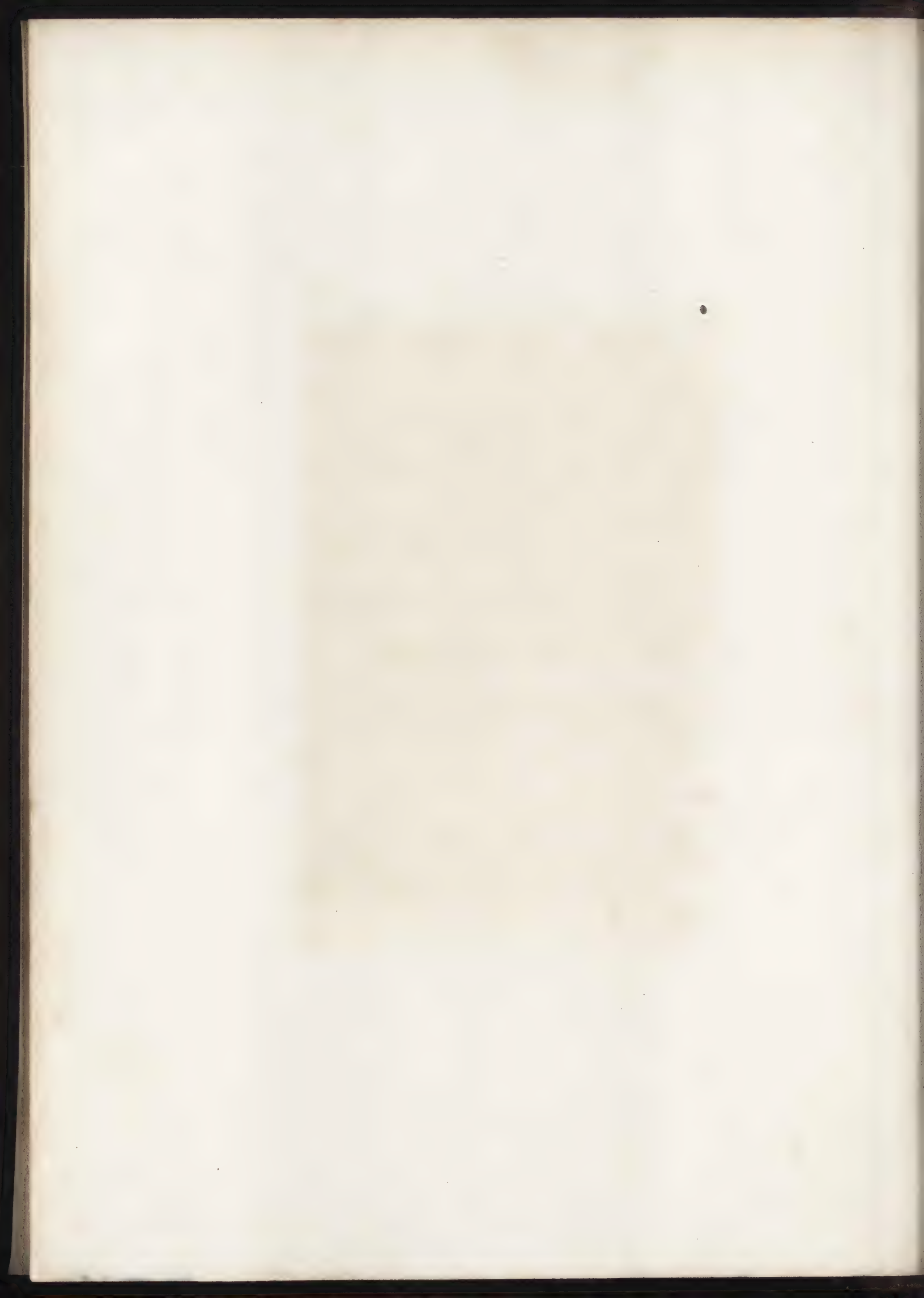


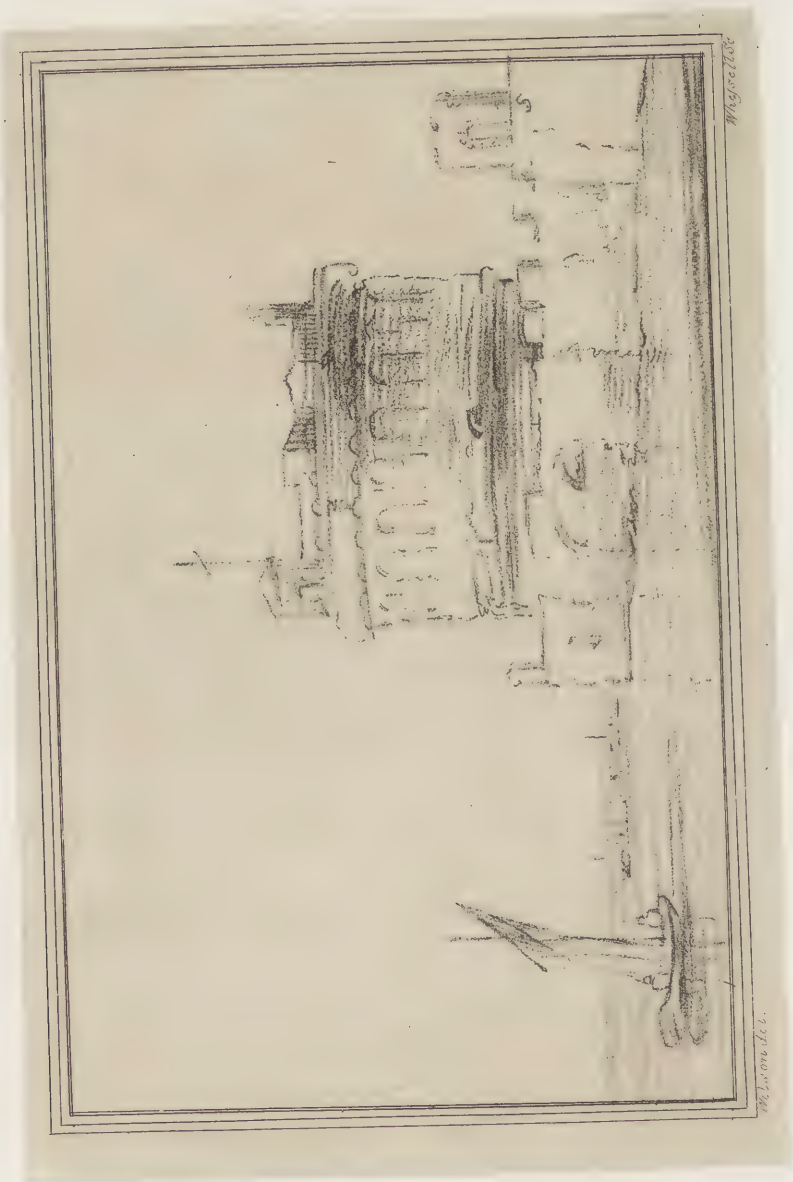




Miguel del.

Milton del.





M. G. 1840

M. G. 1840



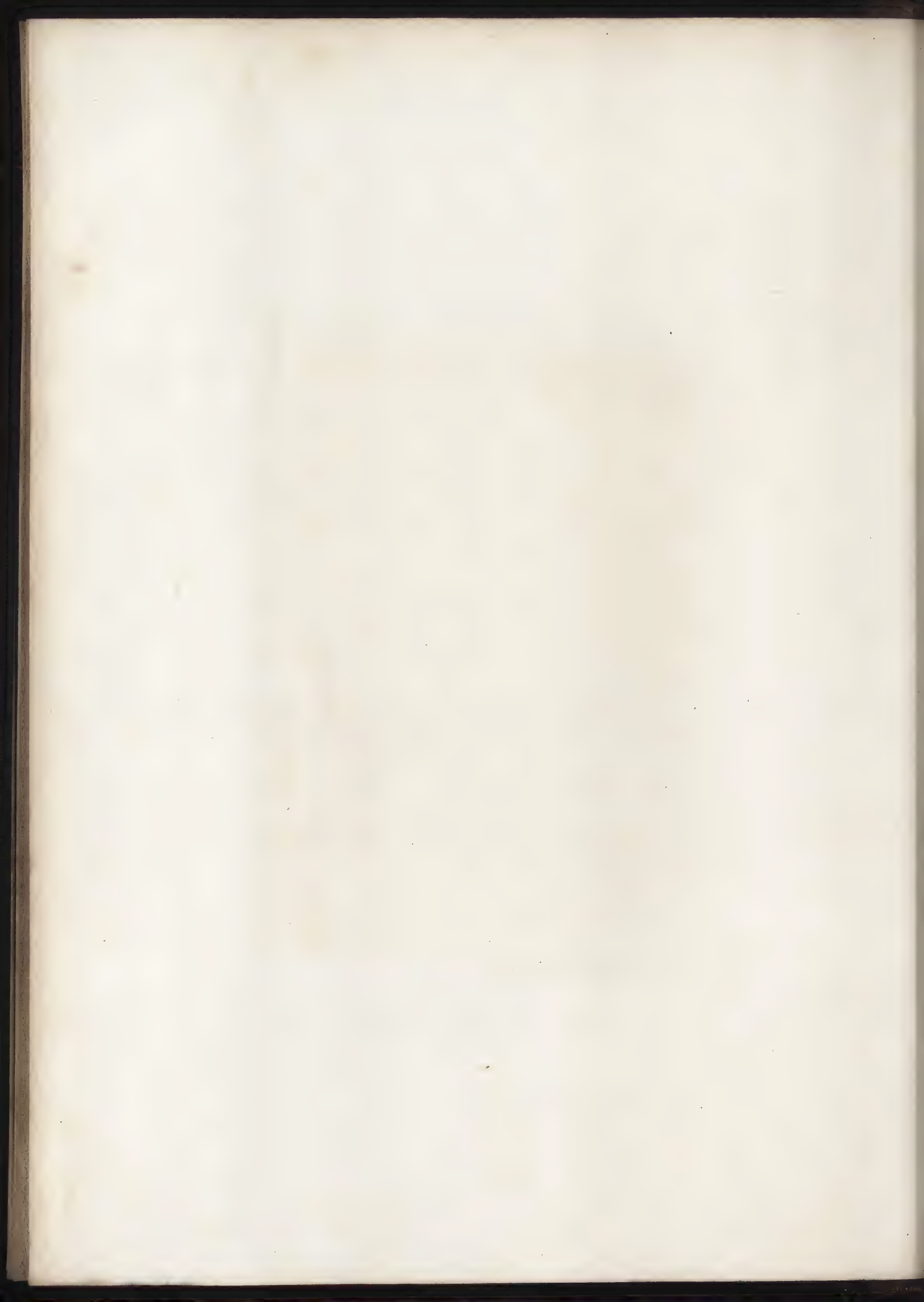


Marjorie

1894













W. & A. 1808

Villa Valmarina

Milano. 1808.





Fig. 1.

1872







W. S. 1811

W. S. 1811





W. H. P. 1816

Wilson del.

















W. H. W. W. W. W.

W. H. W. W. W. W.





Landscapen van de rivier

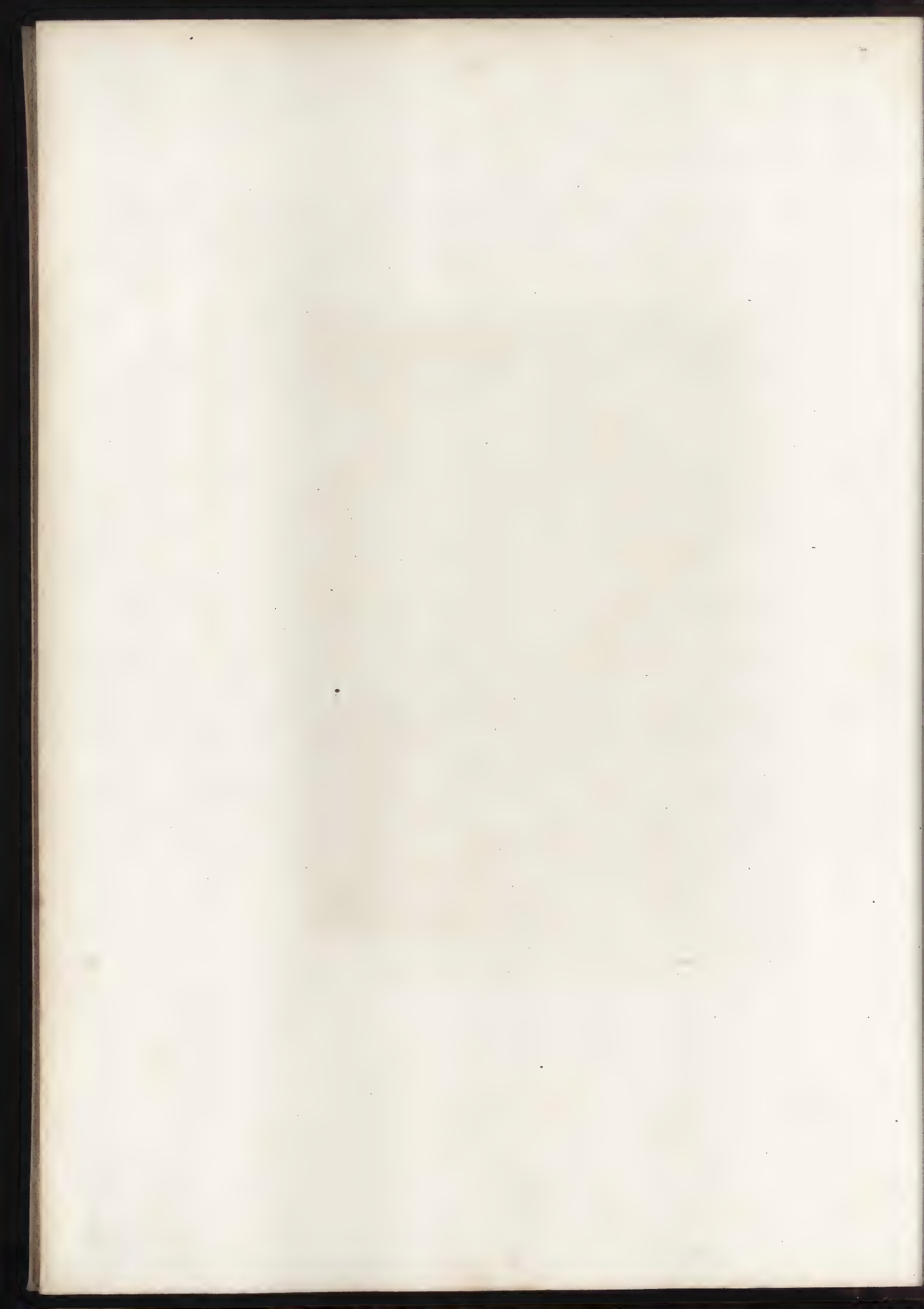
1800





Wilson del.

Wilson del.





W. H. W. 1845

W. H. W. 1845













W. H. W. 1811

W. H. W. 1811









W. J. M. 1864.



W. J. M. 1864.

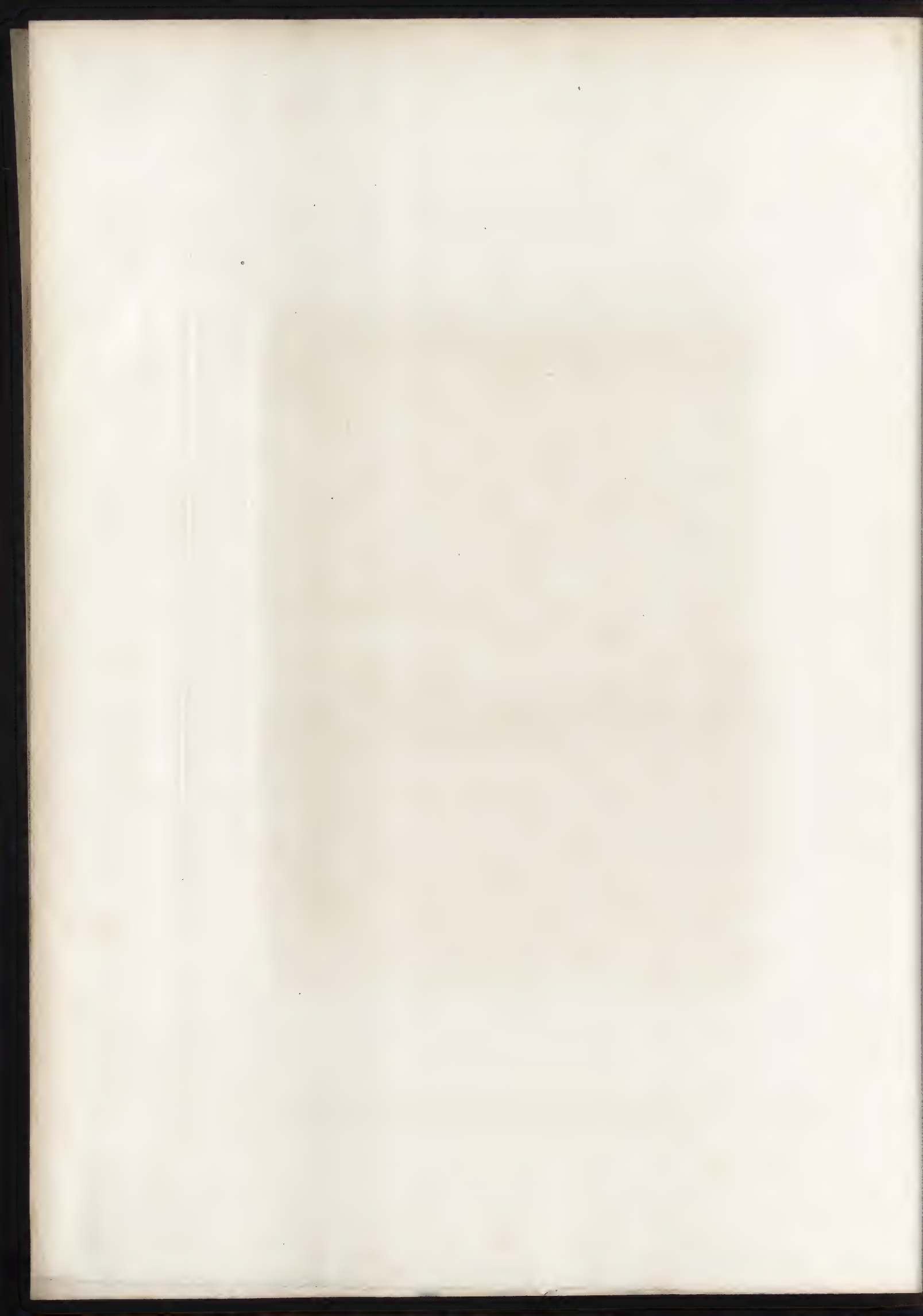






































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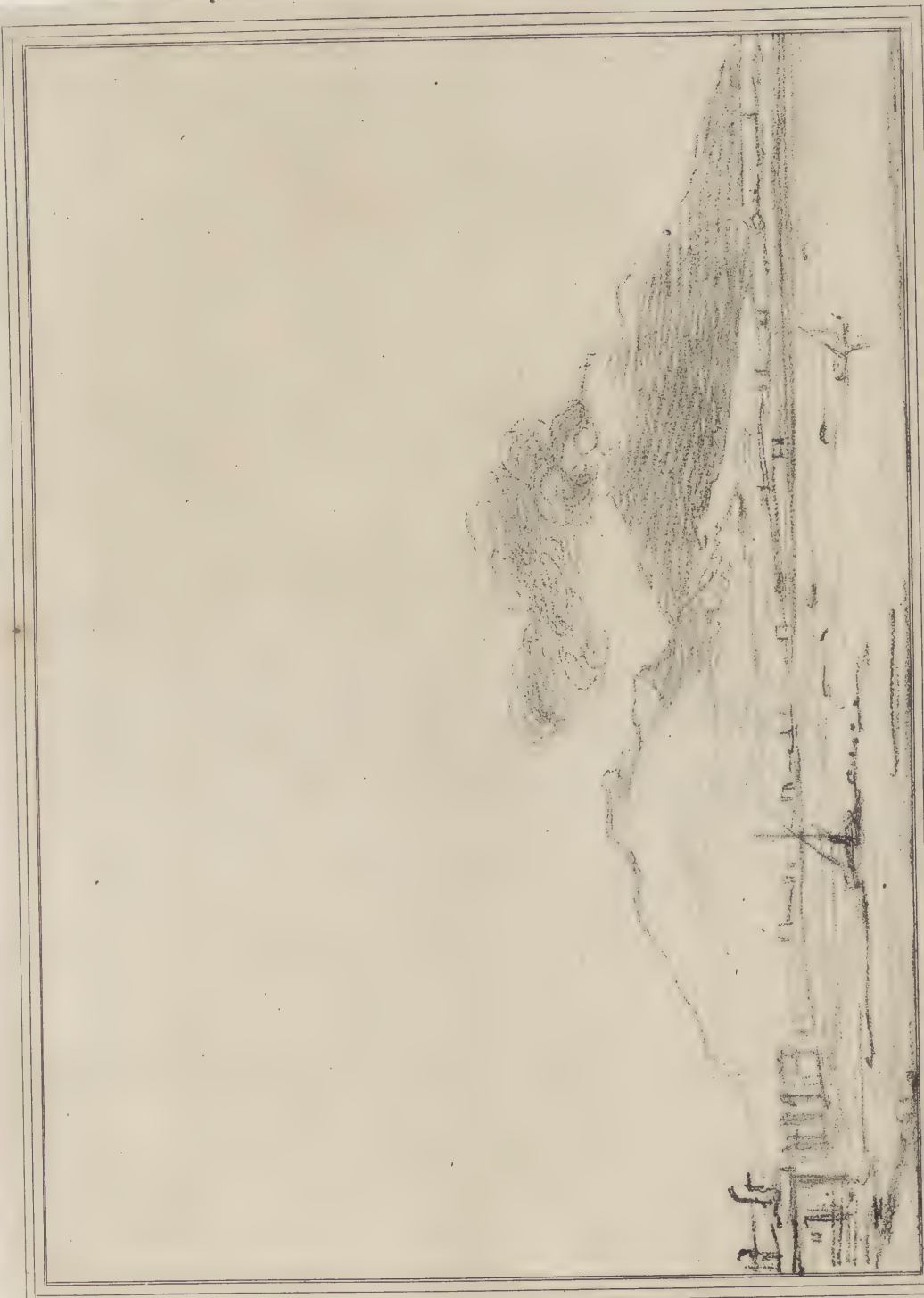


May 1880

Point of View

May 1880





31/10/80

W. 1000 1/2





W. J. G. 1871

W. J. G. 1871



Wesley's Chapel



Wesley's Chapel





Weymouth

From the Quay at Weymouth looking East

Weymouth

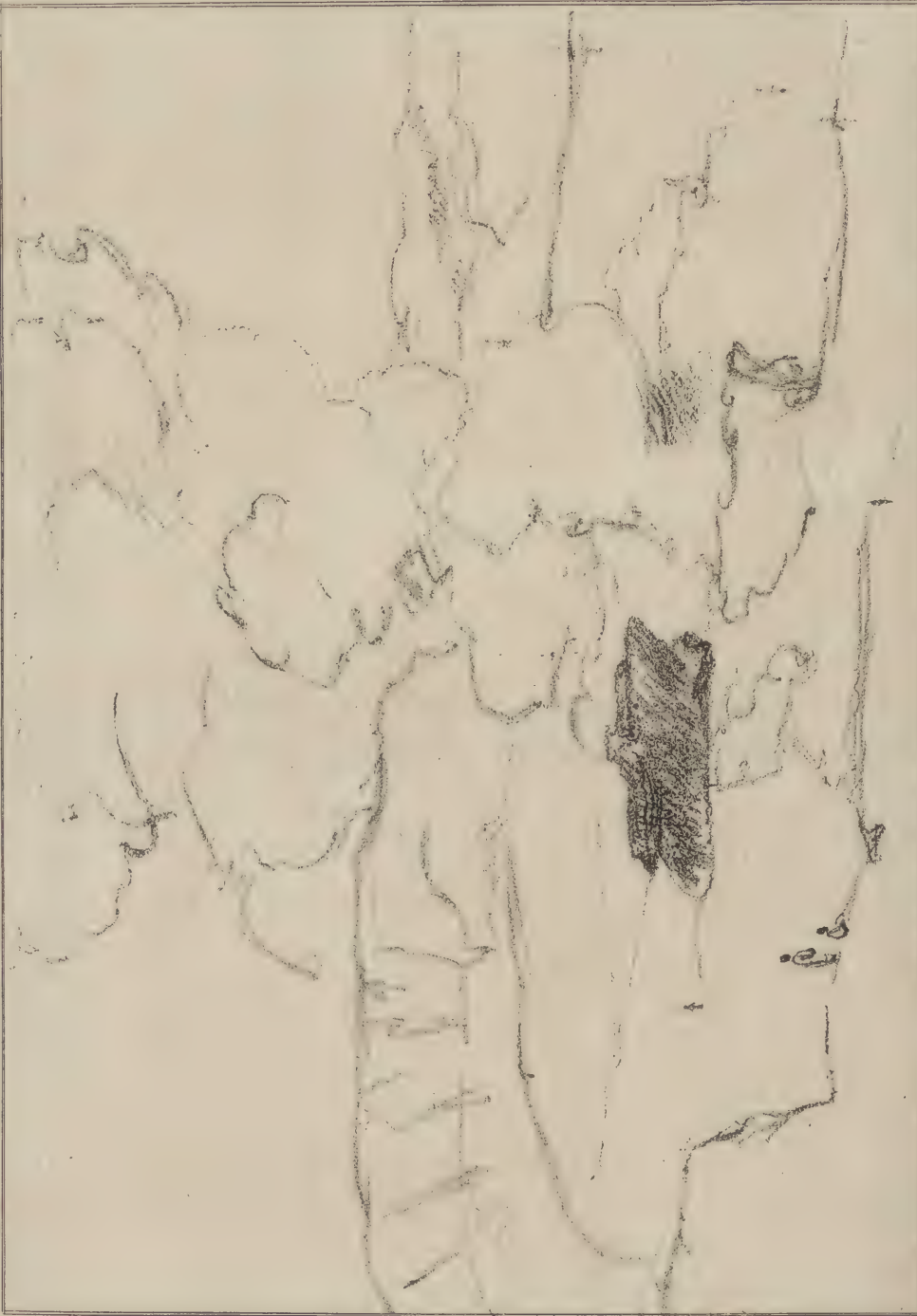




Desolation.

Volcanic act.



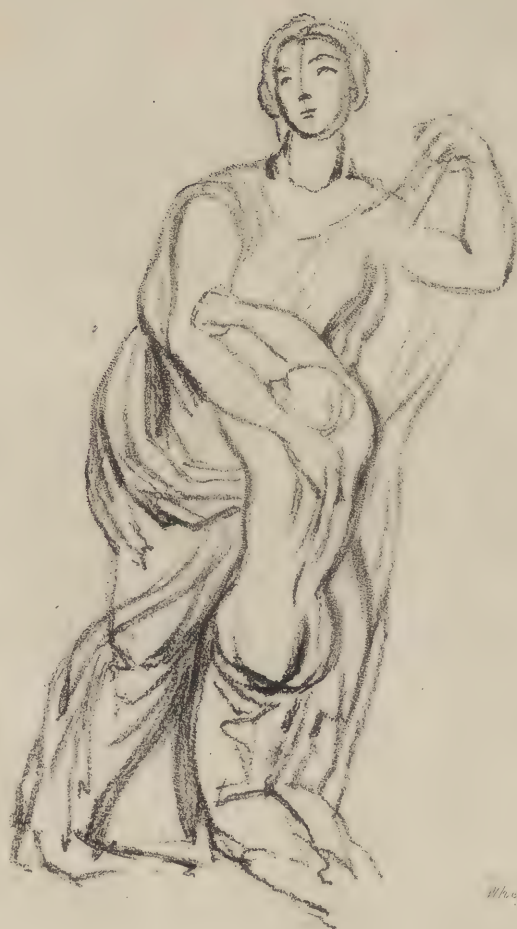


1865/1866

1865/1866

1865/1866





Wilson 12

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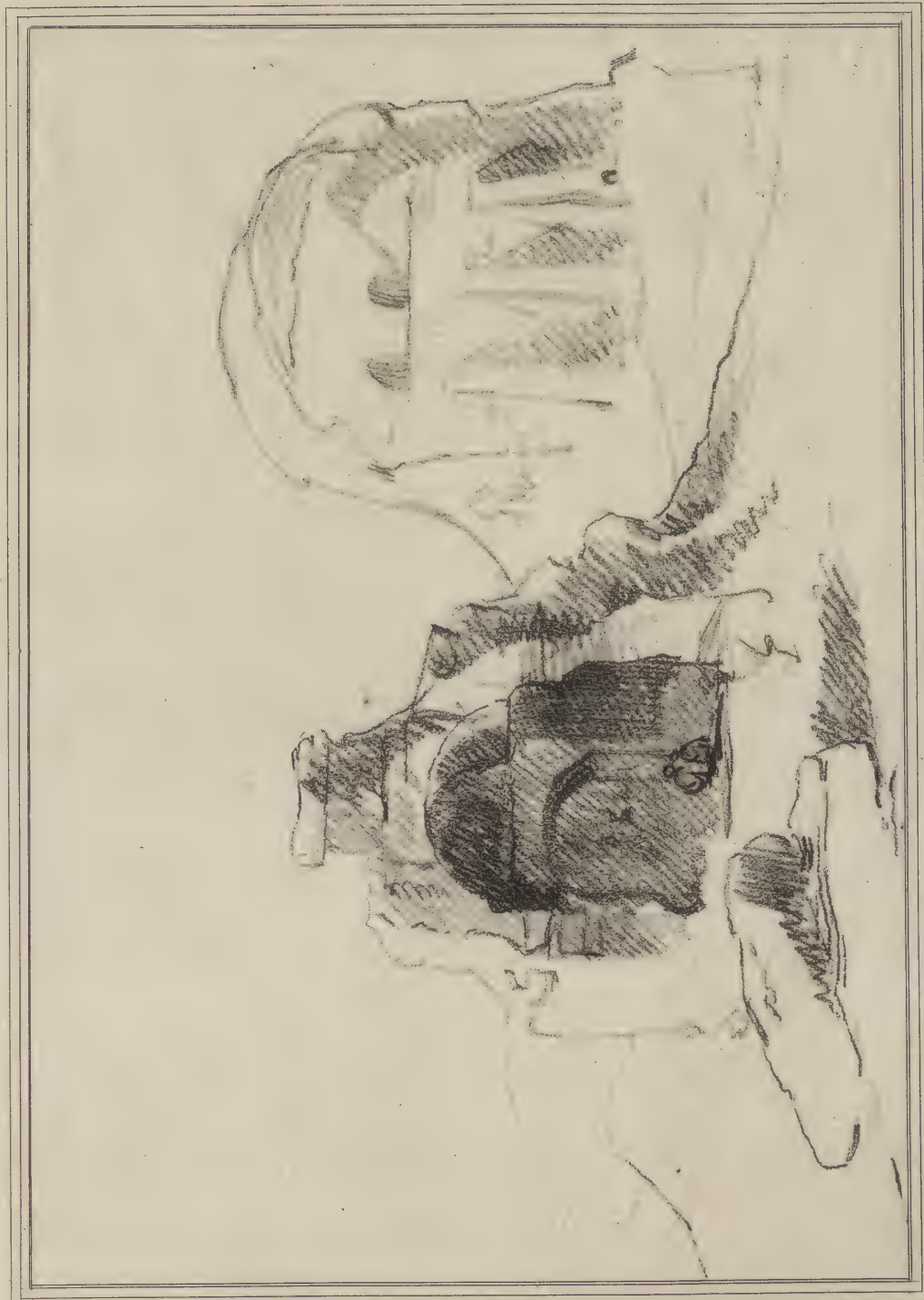




W. J. M. 1841.

W. J. M. 1841.









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M. J. J. J.

Entrance of Herculaneum,

W. J. J. J.





1890.2.2

1890.2.2









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